



HEALTH
and

PLAY for LIFE!

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PlayRight Australia

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History of Playgrounds

1900-2000's

- Play environments have changed and improved consistently over time – not simply at a fashion statement, but as a response to;
 - New materials
 - Innovative designs and ideas
 - Greater awareness of safety
 - Introduction of standards and
 - Advances in child development research



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Design of playground equipment recommended by the
Department of Public Instruction of Virginia, USA circa 1916

1900-1950's: Manufactured Appliance Era



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1960's – 1970's: Log Era



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1970's – 1980's: Modular Era & Introduction of Standards



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1980's –1990's: Safety Era



PUBLISHED STANDARDS

- 1981 **AS1924** Playground Equipment for parks, schools and domestic use
 - Part 1** -General Safety Requirements and test methods &
 - Part 2** – Design & Construction Safety Aspects
- 1982 **AS2155** Playgrounds - Guide to siting and to installation and maintenance of equipment
- 1982 **AS2555** Supervised adventure playgrounds.
- 1996 **AS/NZS4422** Playground Surfacing – Specifications, requirements & test methods
- 1996 **AS/NZS4488** Playgrounds - Playground Equipment Part 1 - Development, installation and inspection, maintenance & operation



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2000's – Millennium Era

New Standards Published 2004 - **AS4685 Parts 1 – 6** (Supersedes AS1924 Part 1 & 2)



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Our Aim: To make play environment not only safer, but also more appropriate and still challenging for children



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Play and Exercise

- **Climbing** develops strength, coordination, balance and risk-taking ability, confidence and self-esteem.
- **Running** and chasing games develops fitness, stamina and agility.
- **Jumping** and **running** develop bone density.
- **Fantasy play** can be fun and relaxing, a way of relieving or having time away from anxiety and stress.

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Health Risks

World Health Organisation estimates;

- 1,7 billion people are overweight and at least 300 millions are obese

And over the last 10-15 years

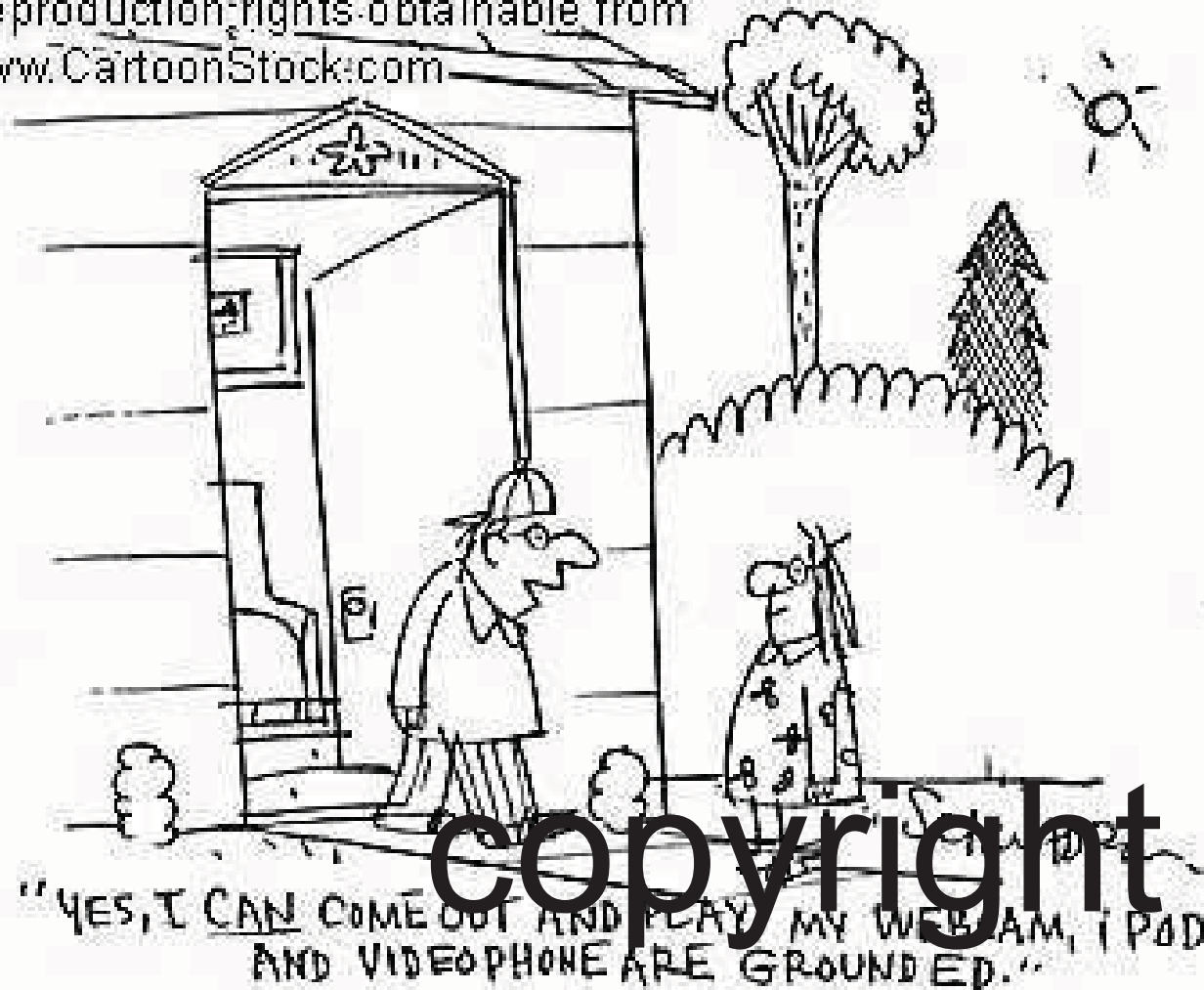
- Severe overweight has double in many third world countries
- Obesity has increased by 10-40% in the industrial countries

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Decline of Outdoor Play?

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THE GOOD AND BAD OF PERTH'S PLAYGROUNDS



Heathcote Reserve, Applecross ✓



Mt Claremont Oval, Claremont ✗



Tomato Lake Playground, Kewdale ✓ Picture: Lee Griffin



Enright Reserve, Hamilton Hill ✗



Hyde Park, Highgate ✗



Lake Monger, Wembley ✗



Subi Centro, Subiaco ✗

Why our playgrounds are no fun for children

ANGELA POWNALL

It should be child's play, but a lack of decent playgrounds is hindering the healthy development of WA's younger generation.

Along with shrinking back gardens, busy lifestyles and parents' safety fears, experts have warned that children's play opportunities have been disappearing over the past 30 years.

Researchers at the University of WA are investigating the diminishing quality and quantity of playgrounds and how it is affecting children.

Dr Lisa Wood, who is leading the research team, said play was a vital part of child development but many modern playgrounds were limited and unchallenging.

She says that physical health is

well as their mental and social health," she said.

Councils and schools often installed the safest playground possible at the expense of a play area that challenged children physically and mentally.

"They've gone a bit overboard in terms of minimising potential risks. In the traditional adventure playground kids can climb logs, for example, but much of that is gone and there are a lot of plastic structures. We need it to be a bit more like the old playgrounds," she said. Dr Wood said the playground at the northern end of Lake Monger was an example of the stock standard playgrounds that gave children limited scope to play.

Adventure play, such as tree-climbing and den-making, has become less unsafe and unappealing to parents. An unusual playground near Subi

Centro in Subiaco features an oversized plastic couch and TV screen, Dr Wood said its benefit to child was limited. "It's glorifying a sedentary lifestyle. There's limited scope for play," she said.

The sculptured playground at Highgate's Hyde Park looks more art than a playground and Dr Wood said it was sterile and not enticing. However, some Perth playgrounds, such as the Walker Park in Ingham, at Heathcote Reserve, Applecross, and the Bay Watson playground in Kings Park. "They have a lot of things where kids can play safely but can get out of the sight of parents," Dr Wood said.

Tomato Lake in Kewdale and derman Park in Innaloo also get thumbs-up for the cargo net-climbing frames.

of an open space, such as in Mt Claremont Oval and Menzies Park, Mt Hawthorn.

"A lot of parks and playgrounds are more sterile now with manicured lawns. It seems the modern playground is very concentrated. It might be a massive park and the play equipment is in one area," Dr Wood said.

She questioned whether evidence supported fencing in playgrounds.

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New playground gear creates a conundrum for kids

New play equipment in a park at Daglish is too big, too weird and too hot, according to some of the children who use it and their parents.

They have tried for two weeks to work out how to use the new gear in a pocket park near Daglish Tennis Club on Hickey Avenue.

Nikki Cullingford is a sprightly nine-year-old and she struggles to get up the climbing wall.

Her mum Sally said: "I suspect it was designed by an architect who has no children."

"Black plastic is a silly idea in the Australian sunshine - it will get dangerously hot."

"The play equipment was replaced without us being asked."

She said the old set-up was very popular and well used.

"The slide was here about 15 years. The baby seat had a chain across the waist, so it was very easy to get in and out - and older kids used it," she said.

"The new seat is much more difficult to use."

"The swings have been replaced

by a very heavy rubberised seat which is so hard it would do serious damage to anybody it hit.

"The flying fox was popular and so was the fire pole - but they've gone."

Nikki said: "We want some monkey bars - and we need shade in summer."

"The new climbing wall has the steps and holds so far apart I can't reach them, and I'm bigger than a lot of kids around here."

"There's a black plastic thing like a esterpillar nobody knows how to use. It slips when you try to climb on it."

"And there's a handle thing at the top of the frame that moves when you touch it - I don't know what that's for."

Subiaco mayor Heather Henderson said people in the Daglish area were lucky they had a choice of parks and playgrounds in Jersey Street, Cliff Sadler Reserve, Stubbs Terrace and Daglish pocket park.

The council was constantly upgrading playgrounds to children of various ages.



What is this thing? A mysterious wiggly gizmo puzzles children.



The new playground has many riddles for young users.



The new climbing frame is a big stretch for young legs.



Nikki Cullingford and Sally Cullingford use the new playground gear at Daglish.

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Are playgrounds less exciting than they used to be?



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Standards – Standardised playground equipment



Over the years playgrounds and play equipment has become increasingly standardised, which has limited room for creativity by designers, manufacturers and consumers.

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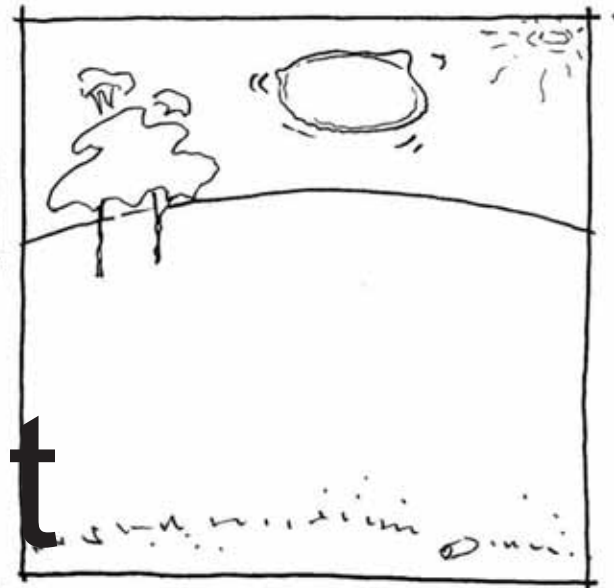
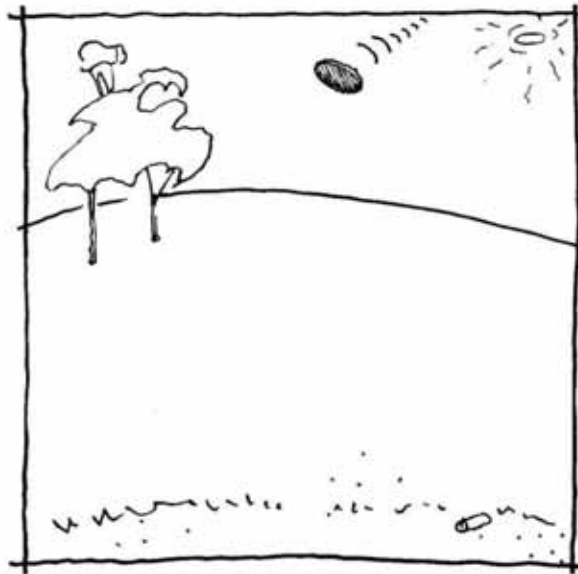
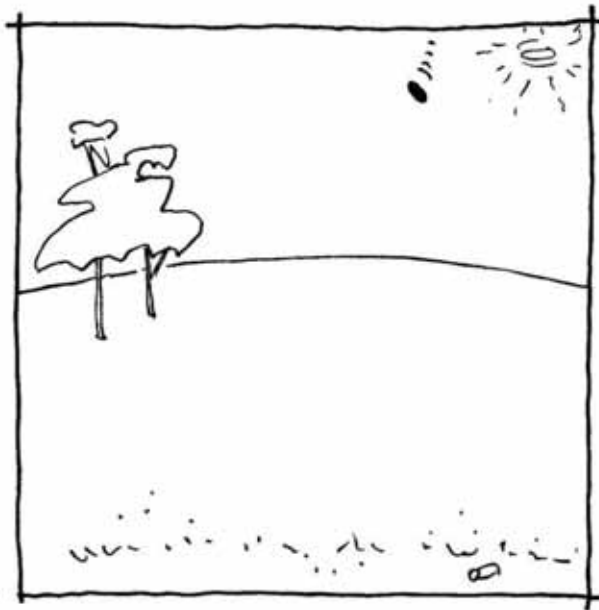


Whaddayawunnado?



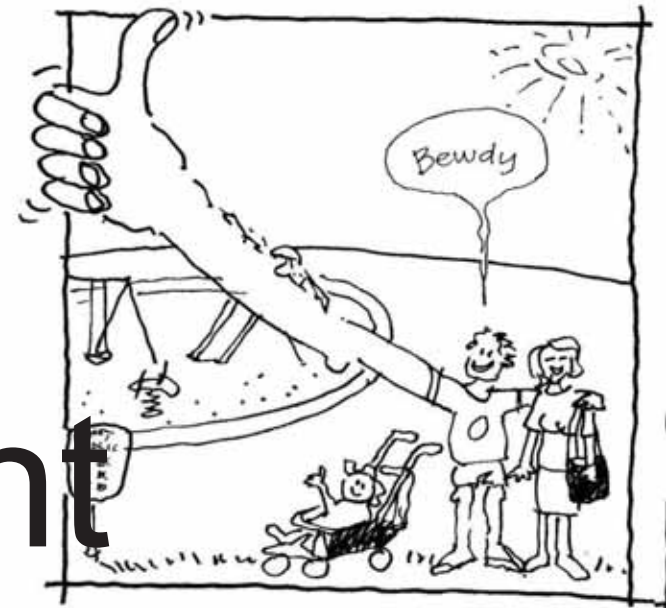
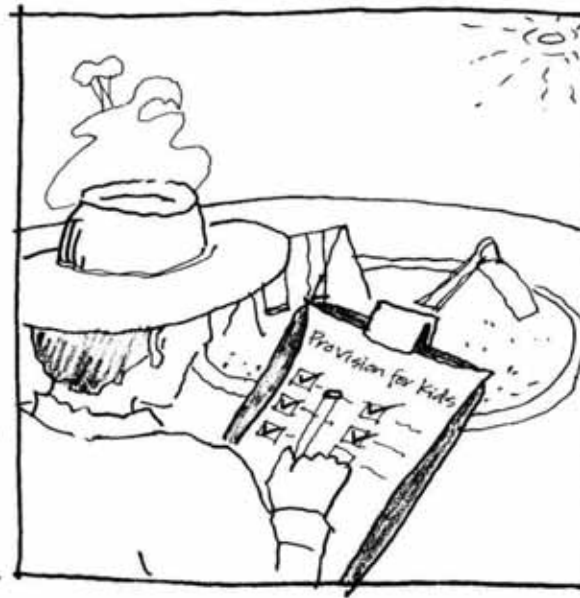
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so don't let the joke be on you....

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Well designed, developed and equipped and natural playspaces have benefits!

- Provide play and recreation opportunities for all
- Provide destination for children to go to
- Provide a destination for parents, grandparents and carers to take children.
- Legitimise a space for play
- Give children independence, challenge, risk and sense of achievement
- Give opportunity to practice skills
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Meeting place and socialisation
- Safeguards an area for the future
- Enables parents to be involved with their children
- Send important messages to children (signs and symbols)
- Brings a community together
- Source of local community pride and help in neighbourhood regeneration
- Memorable moments
- Reduces potential for serious accidents
- Sustainable
- Cited close to homes
- Lasting environment
- Valued by children

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The Challenges for Play Providers

1. Integrate equipment with the natural environment
2. Maintain a sense of the community's and children ownership
3. Make sites more interesting and exciting
4. Provide risk without the hazard
5. Provide a longer play experience
6. Provide sustainable site
7. Provide for older children/teenagers
8. Provide Inclusive and accessible play for all
9. Integrate play schemes
10. Children should be seen and yet be secret
11. Provide change and continuing interest in the site
12. Provide opportunities for wheeled and cycling games
13. Improve maintenance, upgrade and replacement
14. Adequately budget to provide all this

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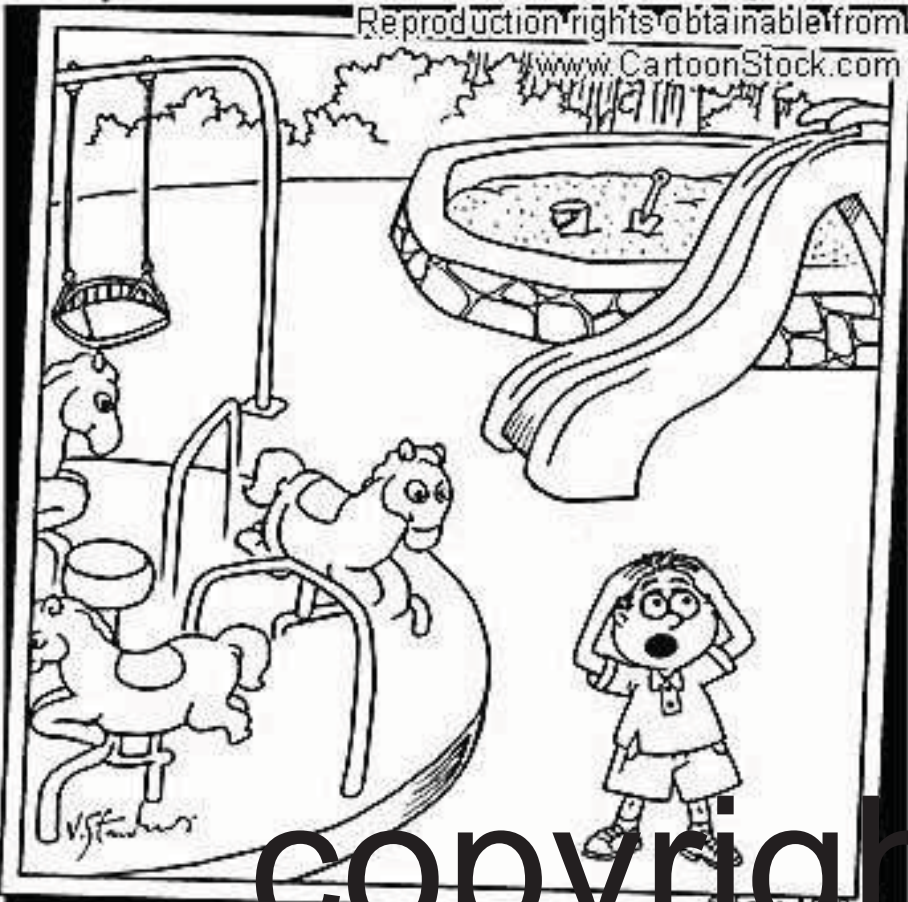


Conclusion

Snapshots

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"Do I use the slide or the merry-go-round? I haven't even touched the swings. I don't know. I DON'T KNOW."

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PLAY for LIFE!

“I believe that it is pointless to say important things about play and about children if they are not followed through by acts which reflect that importance”

Bob Hughes, International Play Journal

“Life is what we make it, always has been,
always will be.”

~Grandma Moses

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“You”ll never know how many children you’ve helped develop, friendships you’ve encouraged, peoples lives you will change especially for inclusion and belonging!..but miss one of the key elements and the experience is life long either way...which way will your pendulum swing?

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